

Amendments to the Claims

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (canceled)
2. (canceled)
3. (canceled)
4. (canceled)
5. (canceled)
6. (original) An expression construct for the production of recombinant polypeptides, which construct comprises an expression cassette consisting of the following elements that are operably linked: a) a promoter; b) the coding region of a DNA encoding a sortase gene product as a purification tag sequence; and c) a cloning site for receiving the coding region for the recombinant polypeptide to be produced; and d) transcription termination signals.
7. (original) The expression construct according to claim 6 wherein the sortase gene product is a *Staphylococcus aureus* *srtA* gene product.
8. (currently amended) The expression construct according to claim 6 ~~or claim 7~~ wherein the sortase gene product is encoded by the nucleotide sequence shown in Figure 4 or a variant or fragment thereof.

9. (currently amended) The expression construct according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 6 ~~to 8~~ wherein the sortase gene product comprises amino acids 26 to 171 of the SrtA sequence shown in Figure 4 or a variant or fragment thereof.

10. (currently amended) A method for producing a polypeptide, comprising:

a) preparing an expression vector for the polypeptide to be produced by cloning the coding sequence for the polypeptide into the cloning site of an expression construct as claimed in ~~any one of claims~~ claim 6 ~~to 9~~;

b) transforming a suitable host cell with the expression construct thus obtained; and

c) culturing the host cell under conditions allowing expression of a fusion polypeptide consisting of the amino acid sequence of the purification tag with the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide to be expressed covalently linked thereto; and

d) isolating the fusion polypeptide from the host cell or the culture medium by means of binding the fusion polypeptide present therein through the amino acid sequence of the purification tag.

11. (original) The method according to claim 10, wherein the sortase gene product is a *Staphylococcus aureus* srtA gene product.

12. (currently amended) The method according to claim 10 ~~or claim 11~~ wherein the sortase gene product is encoded by the nucleotide sequence shown in Figure 4 or a variant or fragment thereof.

13. (currently amended) The method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 10 ~~to 12~~ wherein the sortase gene product comprises amino acids 26 to 171 of the SrtA sequence shown in Figure 4 or a variant or fragment thereof.

14. (original) A fusion polypeptide obtained by the method of any one of claims 10 to 13.

15. (original) A purification tag comprising a sortase gene product.
16. (original) The purification tag according to claim 15 wherein the gene product is a *Staphylococcus aureus* srtA gene product.
17. (currently amended) The purification tag according to claim 15 ~~or claim 16~~ wherein the sortase gene product is encoded by the nucleotide sequence shown in Figure 4 or a variant or fragment thereof.
18. (currently amended) The purification tag according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 15 ~~to 17~~ wherein the sortase gene product comprises amino acids 26 to 171 of the SrtA sequence shown in Figure 4 or a variant or fragment thereof.
19. (currently amended) A method of inducing and/or enhancing an immune response to an antigen of interest, the method comprising administering the antigen of interest with a sortase; ~~e.g. srtA;~~ gene product.
20. (original) The method according to claim 19, wherein the sortase gene product is a *Staphylococcus aureus* srtA gene product.
21. (currently amended) The method according to claim 19 ~~or claim 20~~ wherein the sortase gene product is encoded by the nucleotide sequence shown in Figure 4 or a variant or fragment thereof.
22. (currently amended) The method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 19 ~~to 21~~ wherein the sortase gene product comprises amino acids 26 to 171 of the SrtA sequence shown in Figure 4 or a variant or fragment thereof.